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President: Mr. Nesho (Vice-President) ..... (Albania)

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In the absence of Mr. Akram (Pakistan), Mr. Nesho (Albania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(h) Ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflict (*continued*) (E/2005/70 and E/2005/82)

1. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil) welcomed the appointment of former President Chissano as the Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Guinea-Bissau, noting that diplomatic efforts were essential to the transitional process. Moreover, unless donors increased their assistance, the prospects for lasting peace and stability in that country were bleak. His delegation fully supported the proposed extension of the mandate of the ad hoc advisory group on Guinea-Bissau until the Council's next substantive session.

2. **Ms. Oduneye** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the African Union, commended the ad hoc advisory group for its work in Guinea-Bissau, and the people and Government of that country for the concrete advances achieved. Technical and financial support from the international community would be needed in order to consolidate those advances. She therefore urged donors to fulfil their commitments. Reforms were also sorely needed in the security and military sectors. She therefore called on the United Nations to follow up quickly on Security Council resolution 1580 of 22 December 2004.

3. **Mr. Grey-Johnson** (Gambia) noted that the legislative elections and the first round of the Presidential elections had been conducted in a fair and free manner. The international community must now provide the support needed to enable that fledgling democracy to stand on its own feet. Accordingly, the scheduled donors' conference should take place no later than the end of 2005. Finally, he called for a further six-month extension of the mandate of the ad hoc advisory group.

4. **Mr. Asad Khan** (Pakistan) welcomed the attention being given by the Council to countries emerging from conflict. The three advisory groups set up by the Council had increased cooperation and coordination between it and the Security Council, and their work was a useful input into discussions on the proposed Peacebuilding Commission. The Council would have an important role to play in that Commission. Their recommendations concerning the need for a partnership approach between the national authorities and the international community must be followed up. His delegation therefore supported extending the mandates of all three groups.

5. **Mr. Vaher** (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)) noted that women and children continued to bear the greatest share of hardship and suffering in the aftermath of the conflict in Guinea-Bissau. UNICEF and the United Nations country team had worked with the Government and other partners to design and support programme catering to them, focusing on early childhood development, health and nutrition, water and sanitation and HIV/AIDS protection.

6. However, insecurity and instability continued to hinder programme delivery; children's rights were still being violated and the health and education sectors were in a state of near-collapse at district level. It was essential that adequate and predictable funding be made available for humanitarian and recovery activities. UNICEF therefore looked forward to the forthcoming donors round table.

7. Working with three key national partners, UNICEF had mobilized all political parties and alliances in the country in support of a political agenda for children and adolescents and had secured the commitment of all contestants in the first round of the June 2005 Presidential elections to a presidential agenda for children and adolescents. Both had been instrumental in raising awareness on children-related issues and actions.

8. UNICEF would continue to draw on its considerable experience to support the basic needs and rights of children and women in Guinea-Bissau in the important phase of the transition just beginning.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (E/2005/61)

Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (A/59/823-E/2005/69 and A/59/719-E/2005/12)

Review and Coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/60/81-E/2005/68)

Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 57/12 B and 57/270 B (E/2005/61)

9. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the Secretary-General's third annual progress report (A/60/81-E/2005/68), said that it focused on positive achievements. There had been a number of developments that would benefit the least developed countries, namely: a big increase in official development assistance to those countries; the decision by the Group of Eight (G-8) to cancel the external debt of 18 heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs), including 13 LDCs; the special attention given at the G-8 Summit to the need for comprehensive market access to the products and capacity development needs of LDCs; the G-8's special focus on Africa; the attention given to LDCs at the recent South-South Summit in Qatar and at the meeting of the High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation; and the promising outcome of the High-level Forum on aid effectiveness that had recently been held in Paris. Nevertheless, development indicators in the 50 LDCs were so low that without resolute and vigorous international attention, those countries would not be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

10. Recalling that the principle of partnership with civil society and the private sector, supported by the international community, was an integral component of the Brussels Programme of Action, he said that most LDCs had great difficulty coping with the demands of the various partners. The United Nations system and international partners should therefore strive for one analytical process to determine poverty reduction strategies, thereby reducing the burden on LDC Governments.

11. Despite a relatively fast economic growth rate in LDCs, 43 per cent of their population continued to live in extreme poverty; if current trends continued, the number of people living in such conditions in those countries was expected to increase substantially by 2015. The major obstacles to implementation of the Brussels Programme were insufficient country ownership, lack of human, institutional and technical capacity, and scant financial resources. All LDC Governments, in partnership with civil society and the private sector and with the assistance of Resident Coordinators, needed to frame national development strategies, with which donor countries must fully align their assistance.

12. The development process of LDCs did not mean just increasing GDP, but also building capacity, involving them in decision-making and opening up opportunities for people to improve their living conditions. It was therefore crucial that development partners help the 50 LDCs to seize the opportunities offered by the Programme and become not just the beneficiaries of change but also its agents.

13. **Mr. Khan** (Director, Division for ECOSOC Support and Coordination), introducing the report of the Secretary-General (E/2005/61), said that it provided an update on the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 50/227, 52/12 B and 57/270 B, which contained some of the most important provisions for promoting an integrated, coordinated and coherent approach to the work of the Council, its subsidiary bodies and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly in the context of the integrated approach to conference follow-up. It also suggested ways of realigning the United Nations development system and intergovernmental bodies in order to ensure more sustained and better integrated implementation of the United Nations development agenda.

14. **Mr. Blake** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that recent discussions confirmed that a lack of financial resources had been the major handicap to the implementation of the decisions of the major United Nations conferences and summits. The Group had made a number of specific proposals for action in the areas of domestic and financial resources, international trade, international financial and technical cooperation, and external debt and for addressing systemic issues with a view to enhancing coherence.

15. The Group of 77 and China welcomed the recognition by the Group of Eight (G-8) that a global development challenge was facing the world as a whole; that developing countries must plan their economic policies to fit their own development strategies; and that a substantial increase was required in official development assistance and the commitment by the G-8 to double the level of official development assistance by 2004, to cancel 100 per cent of the outstanding debt of some heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) to certain international financial institutions, and to monitor commitments and enhance aid effectiveness, including by untying aid and through timely and predictable disbursement.

16. However, the Group of 77 and China still had some concerns with regard to the process for transforming the agreements of the G-8 into broader United Nations commitments at the High-level Plenary Meeting in September 2005; the process for managing the delivery of official development assistance; the implied conditionality and selectivity inherent in the use of the term "eligible"; the treatment of other countries with special needs, many of which were not in Africa; and the treatment of the systemic issue.

17. It was prepared to make its contribution towards financing development in the South through the continued mobilization of internal resources and through South-South cooperation and looked forward to the adoption of a new approach in the negotiations for the outcomes of the High-level Plenary Meeting.

18. **Ms. Gordon** (Jamaica), speaking of behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed regret at the less-than-satisfactory pace of implementation of resolution 57/270 B and, with a view to reversing that trend, called on the Council to urgently complete a multi-year work programme for its coordination segment, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2005/61, para. 18), and to enhance the efficiency of its reporting procedures particularly between the Council and its subsidiary, regional and related bodies. Such efficiency improvements would go a long way towards improving the Council's ability to exercise its coordination and assessment role.

19. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/81-E/2005/68), she said that achievement of the targets set out in the Brussels Programme of Action would undoubtedly lead to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by the least developed countries. Accordingly, developed countries that had not yet done so should endeavour to meet the target of providing 0.20 per cent of their gross national income as official development assistance to the least developed countries. Development partners should also align their support to the national development strategies of the least developed countries.

20. In view of the critical importance of the participation of the least developed countries in the annual review of the Brussels Programme of Action by the Council, the Secretary-General should take steps to redress the continued under-representation of experts from those countries at the substantive session through funding from the regular budget of the United Nations. Moreover, given the decision to hold the comprehensive review of the Programme of Action in 2006 within the General Assembly during its sixty-first session, the Secretary-General should hold consultations with Member States, the United Nations system of organizations and all relevant stakeholders with a view to assisting the least developed countries in preparing their reviews at national and regional levels.

21. The methodological structure of the annual progress report should be improved. The present report, although quite comprehensive, was lacking in its practical assessment of the progress achieved by the least developed countries and their development partners. It would have been useful if performance indicators had been provided for each of the seven commitments of the Programme of Action, and particularly for the goals and targets. The next report should include those elements and should focus more on results, performance and analysis.

22. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) should be commended for its efforts to further the implementation of programmes of action for such countries. It might be useful for the Office to develop a comprehensive strategy to raise greater awareness about the weak implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action and to mobilize greater support and more actions for its effective timely implementation.

23. **Ms. Houngbedji** (Benin), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that the methodology and structure of the Secretary-General's report needed to be improved. Despite the numerous efforts made to produce a more analytical and results-oriented report, it said nothing about the impacts of those actions and their implications for the realization of the goals contained in the Brussels Programme of Action. The report appeared to be a compilation of data and extracts gathered from various other documents without the least analytical effort.

24. The Brussels Programme of Action was not only a partnership framework between the least developed countries and their development partners but also the specific interpretation of the Millennium Development Goals for those countries. There was thus an irrefutable correlation between those Goals and the Brussels Programme of Action. Implementation of and compliance

with the commitments contained in the latter therefore remained a clear measure of the achievement of the Goals in the least developing countries.

25. Development partners must comply with the commitments they had undertaken regarding, inter alia, poverty eradication; governance at the international level; strengthening of human and institutional capacities; reduction of vulnerability and protection of the environment; and mobilization of financial resources. The Group called upon all development partners who had not yet done so to honour their commitments, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 83 of the Brussels Programme of Action and congratulated those who had met the goals of providing 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income as official development assistance to the least developed countries. The Group also welcomed the continued support provided by other partner countries, the funds and programmes, the Bretton Woods institutions and the specialized United Nations agencies.

26. The Group suggested that the Secretary-General should immediately begin consultations with all concerned parties in preparation for the review of the Programme of Action in 2006. Greater emphasis must be placed on specific results and on comparative analysis of the fulfilment of commitments undertaken by all parties. In that context, the structure and methodology of future reports should be reconsidered. The Brussels Programme of Action could not be evaluated without the presence of the main actors, namely the least developed countries. For that reason, the least developed countries reiterated their appeal to the Secretary-General to take steps to ensure the participation of two representatives from each least developed country at the annual substantive sessions of the Council, which should be funded through the regular budget of the United Nations. The insistence that funds should be allocated from the regular budget was based on the poor results obtained from relying on voluntary contributions. For the third Programme of Action to avoid the same fate as the previous two, the Secretary-General should put in place a coherent and proactive strategy aimed at raising greater awareness among the international community about its weak implementation rate.

27. **Mr. Zhang** Yishan (China) said that while a majority of the least developed countries had made great efforts to meet the seven commitments set out in the Programme of Action, they still faced a daunting challenge in terms of capacity-building and resource mobilization. They could hardly be expected to meet the development goals on their own and badly needed international support and assistance.

28. Trade was the engine for economic growth. However, the least developed countries were underutilizing such schemes as the Everything but Arms initiative and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), owing to their supply-side constraints, their lack of trade-related capacity and to non-tariff barriers. To ensure that the least developed countries truly benefited from those preferences, developed countries and international organizations needed to help them in trade-related capacity-building. His Government therefore called upon the developed countries to take specific measures to grant greater market access to the products of the least developed countries.

29. Since the least developed countries had only a limited capability to raise domestic resources, official development assistance still had a special and significant role to play in their economic development. His delegation commended those countries that had already met the target of providing 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national income as ODA to the least developed countries and called upon others to meet that target as soon as possible. His delegation hoped that the G-8 initiative on debt relief would be implemented in a timely manner and that it could be further expanded to benefit all 50 least developed countries.

30. China had provided various forms of technical and in-kind assistance to a great number of least developed countries over the past 50 years. His Government had already cancelled 1.3 billion dollars in debt from 31 least developed countries in Africa and had also provided debt relief to some of Asia's least developed countries. It attached great importance to human resources development and, through active cooperation with the least developed countries in that area, had contributed to their capacity-building. Negotiations on granting tariff-free market access to some of the commodities from the least developed countries in Africa had begun in 2004 and 25 countries had benefited from such preferential treatment by 1 January 2005. China was thus helping the least developed countries to develop and expand their external trade through active and effective measures.

31. **Mr. Mushy** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that Tanzania had prepared a 10-year plan of action for

the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, which in turn had been integrated into the newly adopted national strategy for growth and reduction of poverty, known as MKUKUTA. The goals of the plan included peace and stability, good governance, an educated society, and a competitive economy.

32. As noted in The Secretary-General's overall performance in the least developed countries was insufficient to meet the Programme goals. Although Tanzania had made great strides in areas such as human rights, policy harmonization and macroeconomic reforms, it needed international support. The greatest challenge was to devise a strategy for sustaining the GDP growth of 6.7 per cent. That could not be done unless it received external financial resources and assistance in human and institutional capacity-building.

33. ODA still constituted a major source of development financing for the least developed countries; however, as external resources were inadequate and unpredictable, other funding options and modalities needed to be addressed. It was essential to consider both the quantitative and qualitative aspects of aid as well as its effective coordination and use. His delegation appealed to the developed countries to meet the target for development assistance as quickly as possible and expressed the hope that development partners would adhere to the Tanzanian Joint Assistance Strategy (JAS), which called for the harmonization of aid policies; alignment of aid with the priorities set out in MKUKUTA; the streamlining of aid delivery; and the untying of aid.

34. The Tanzanian economy depended on agriculture; his Government therefore appealed to the international community to assist in the modernization and mechanization of the agricultural sector. Developed countries were urged to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers, including subsidies, so as to remove obstacles and distortions in the prices of commodities produced in least developed countries. Concerted efforts were needed to ensure that agriculture was at the centre of the Doha development round.

35. In conclusion, his Government appealed to its development partners to provide and increase assistance for the speedy implementation of the MKUKUTA, thereby ensuring that Tanzania achieved the Programme commitments and other internationally agreed development goals.

36. **Mr. Ananiev** (Russian Federation) said that, three years after the Monterrey Conference, political will remained strong within the international community to implement the mechanisms proposed for development financing. His delegation would like to see the Council's role in that area strengthened, and therefore supported the recent proposals of the Secretary-General, including those regarding regular ministerial-level review of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. The Council should become a forum for coordination of development actions, and its expanded linkages with the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations Development Group were a positive step. The Council could also convene emergency meetings to evaluate threats to development and propose a response. In the view of his delegation, the Council's existing mechanisms were effective in ensuring cooperation and coordination, and were not in need of fundamental reform.

37. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2005/61) regarding strengthening the work of the Council's functional commissions and subsidiary bodies. It also supported his proposals on the strengthening of cooperation between the Council and the Regional Commissions and among the Commissions themselves.

38. The outcome of the high-level meeting between the Council, the Bretton Woods institutions, UNCTAD and the World Trade Organization, as well as the decisions taken at the recent meeting of the Group of Eight would speed up implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action. Measures including cancellation of the debt for heavily indebted poor countries, especially in Africa, would help to mobilize resources for development. For its part, the Russian Federation had written off $2.2 billion in bilateral debt with several of the least developed countries in Africa. On the whole, it supported a long-term approach to financing for development based on the outcome of the Monterrey Conference. Expansion of world trade on a more equitable basis would create additional possibilities for meeting the Goals, and thus it supported appeals for the rapid completion of the Doha round of trade negotiations. His Government was encouraging trade liberalization through lowering of tariffs and applying a special preferential regime to the goods of many developing countries.

39. **Mr. Chowdhury** (Bangladesh) said that, although the global trends in economic growth and poverty reduction were encouraging, more than 1 billion people still lived on less than one dollar a day. His Government believed that achievement of development required a prudent mix of, inter alia, socio-economic strategies, sound macroeconomic management and appropriate external support. It had already achieved considerable progress in the socio-economic sectors, and had completed a poverty reduction strategy paper. Government policies and programmes were being harmonized with those of its development partners. To help reduce the gap between rich and poor, Bangladesh had adopted a national information and communication technology policy and was currently working on the establishment of a high tech park with all modern infrastructural facilities.

40. Although trade was a powerful engine of growth, poverty reduction and sustainable development, the share of the least developed countries in world trade was still below 1 per cent. Steps should be taken to: promote duty-free, quota-free market access to all products from least developed countries; eliminate protectionism; ensure adequate financial and technical assistance to the least developed countries that had been affected by the phasing out of the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA); and free access to developed country markets for temporary movement of natural persons under mode 4 of the General Agreement in Trade in Services; and establish an "aid for trade fund". Finally, the least developed countries should be allowed to participate more fully in international economic decision-making and norm-setting processes.

41. Least developed countries were extremely vulnerable to natural disasters and the adverse effects of global warming and climate change. Furthermore, safe water coverage in Bangladesh had been reduced to 72 per cent, due to arsenic contamination. Bangladesh needed extended financial and technical support from development partners to mitigate the contamination and address its root causes.

42. His Government urged all developed countries to meet the target for official development assistance. Frontloading of additional resources through the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) and other innovative mechanisms would also be welcomed. It was important that outstanding debts be written off immediately, so that resources could be freed up for investment in development. Future assistance should be unconditional and grant-based, and should take the form of direct budgetary support.

43. **Mr. Meyer** (Brazil) said that, although Brazil was encouraged by recent developments as regards ODA commitments, some developed countries had not yet established a timetable for achieving ODA targets. It also was imperative that debt alleviation be expanded to benefit all developing countries, including those in the middle-income category.

44. With regard to trade, Brazil hoped that negotiations within the Doha round would be concluded by 2006. Along with others, Brazil had consistently argued in favour of an innovative financing mechanism. Their position had been recognized at the Council's recent meeting with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and at the high-level dialogue on development financing.

45. Brazil supported the proposals concerning an International Finance Facility and a pilot project concerning solidarity contributions levied on the sale of air tickets. In the spirit of paragraph 18 of the Monterrey Consensus, Brazil hoped to present a proposal aimed at reducing the cost of remittances, for consideration at the next session of the General Assembly. While remittances were not a public source of financing, it was clear that reducing the transaction costs involved would help developing nations fight hunger and poverty and contribute to their achievement of the other development goals.

46. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Mexico) noted that the appeal for increased participation by developing countries in international financial institutions had not been answered and that coherence and coordination at the national and regional levels also needed to be improved.

47. Mexico welcomed the recent decisions taken by the Group of Eight (G-8), particularly with regard to debt alleviation and ODA. However, it was important to bear in mind that increasing the quality of aid was as important as increasing its quantity.

48. It was also important to acknowledge the progress made as regards governance and the rule of law, and the development of an enabling environment for the mobilization of internal and external resources.

At the same time, it was necessary to strengthen the participation of the private sector.

49. The international community should pay greater attention to the needs and concerns of middle-income countries; they did not receive large amounts of ODA, and depended on measures aimed at solving the foreign debt problem and guaranteeing an equitable trade system.

50. Finally, concrete decisions must be taken at the September summit on ways to achieve the development goals. It was also important to define measures to strengthen the follow-up mechanism, so as to ensure that the commitments made at Monterrey would be met.

51. **Mr. Silva** (Cape Verde) said that his country had incorporated the goals and recommendations of the Brussels Programme of Action into its major national development strategies and had adopted a poverty reduction strategy paper in October 2004.

52. Several conditions were needed to achieve the development goals. Firstly, equipment and training should be provided to improve national statistical systems for national and international accounts. Secondly, it was urgent that debts be alleviated and that the external debts of least developed countries be cancelled so that they could spend the money instead on key sectors, such as health and education. The international community should also assist the least developed countries in creating the infrastructures needed to develop a dynamic economy, so that they could participate more fully in the global economy.

53. Finally, in view of the fact that the Brussels Programme was a partnership framework between the developed and least developed countries, Cape Verde appealed to both sides to fulfil their commitments so that the development goals could be achieved.

54. **Mr. Kommasith** (Lao People's Democratic Republic) said that his country was on track in its efforts to achieve the development goals by 2015. However, public awareness of the Programme of Action needed to be intensified so as to encourage broader participation in the implementation process, for lack of awareness among all stakeholders had slowed implementation.

55. With respect to capacity, it had been noted that lack of statistics and low statistics capacity were common in the majority of least developed countries. Capacity-building should be based on a genuine partnership in both technology transfer and expertise.

56. Lack of resources also affected the implementation of the Programme. In order to attract direct foreign investment, countries required good infrastructure and profit-driven market access. Unfortunately, most least developed countries could not achieve these on their own. ODA remained crucial to development efforts and poverty eradication. While continuing to provide ODA, the donor community should also consider providing aids in the form of grants rather than loans, with a view to directly supporting the poorest communities and maximizing their access to financial resources.

57. His Government welcomed the European Union's commitment to substantially increase its ODA. It was equally pleased that the South Development Fund had been established and hoped that the least developed countries would be given priority when the fund came into operation.

58. **Mr. Zenna** (Observer for Ethiopia) noted that following the adoption, inter alia, of the Brussels Programme of Action, which outlined seven commitments which specified the respective roles of least developed countries and their development partners, the global community was coming closer together in addressing the key development challenge of how to promote sustained economic growth and development.

59. Ethiopia had designed a people-centred policy framework focused on rural development, as 85 per cent of its people derived their livelihood from agriculture. It had made significant progress in decentralization, and had just held its third parliamentary elections; another round was scheduled for August. His Government had attached great importance to building human and institutional capacities, and had established a Ministry of Capacity Building. Sector investment programmes in education and health had achieved encouraging results. The primary school enrolment rate had more than tripled in a decade, to over 70 per cent. The challenges were still overwhelming, however, and much remained to be done to build productive capacities to make globalization work for the least developed countries. The role of official development assistance could not be overemphasized, and his delegation supported the call to launch the International Finance Facility in 2005.

60. The fact that the least developed countries accounted for more than 10 per cent of the world's population but less than 1 per cent of world trade was a clear testament to their marginalization. They had not been able to take advantage of the many trade and market access initiatives designed to benefit them, however, owing to supply-side constraints, lack of trade-related capacity and non-tariff barriers, notably rules of origin and product standards. Membership in the World Trade Organization could enhance their participation in its norm setting processes, and accession procedures must not be made unduly complicated and cumbersome.

61. With respect to reducing vulnerability and protecting the environment, Ethiopia suffered from recurrent drought and had designed an early warning system to help withstand the consequence of such drought and a productive safety nets programme aimed at addressing food insecurity.

62. In the critical area of resource mobilization, he commended those countries which had reached and surpassed targets for official development assistance and the efforts to cancel the multilateral debt of 18 HIPC countries. Recent efforts by the major industrialized countries and at the Doha round of trade negotiations would go a long way towards integrating the least developed countries into the global economy.

63. **Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said in response to the representatives of the Group of 77 and China and of the least developed countries, that the Union had set out its ambitions on financing for development in statements in recent weeks, which included reaffirmation of the Monterrey partnership, under which developing countries had primary responsibility for their own development, domestic resource mobilization, promoting transparency in governance, human rights and tackling corruption. Developing countries had made important commitments in that regard at the recent South-South summit and at the African Union summit. Many delegations had welcomed the recent European Union commitments in the area of resource mobilization and the Paris Declaration, which called for less conditionality, not more. European Union leaders had welcomed the recent commitments on debt relief and the proposals for innovative financing and were committed to a successful development round of trade negotiations, and to further aid-for-trade assistance.

Coordination, programme and other questions *(continued)*

(a) Reports of coordination bodies (E/2005/63 and A/60/16)

(b) Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (A/60/6, Sections 2, 9 to 13, 13/Add.1 and 14 to 27)

(g) Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (E/2005/59)

(i) Calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields (E/2005/L.12 and E/2005/81)

64. **Mr. Fareed** (Director, Secretariat of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)), introducing the report of the Chief Executives Board (E/2005/63), which was complemented by a publication of the Board entitled "One United Nations", said that CEB had focused on the system's collective contributions to the implementation of the Millennium Declaration, and had concentrated on a number of cross-linked substantive areas. It had provided policy guidance to ensure the system's support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and had been helping to build an effective system-wide response to organized transnational crime and building a system-wide capacity to prevent and manage armed conflicts. CEB had further addressed issues of information and communication technology and human resource management.

65. He suggested that it might be opportune for the Council to include, in its coordination segment, a full consideration of CEB's work as that would reaffirm the central coordinating role of the Council and intensify dialogue between it and the organizations of the system.

66. **Mr. Piot** (Executive Director, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)) said that in the past few years the world's response to AIDS had gathered such strength that for the first time ever there was a real opportunity to halt and begin to reverse that devastating epidemic. The momentum was building on three levels: political, financial and results. The global response to AIDS had entered a new era, where the implementation of large-scale programmes

combining HIV prevention, treatment and impact mitigation could reverse the epidemic.

67. In February 2004, UNAIDS had launched the Global Coalition on Women and AIDS to focus attention on the increasing feminization of the epidemic and to make AIDS response work better for women. The centrepiece of UNAIDS activities to improve access to HIV treatment had been the "3 by 5" Initiative, led by WHO. With the goal of strengthening and harmonizing AIDS efforts, a consensus had been developed in favour of the "three ones" principles: each country had one national AIDS strategy that integrated the work of all partners under national ownership and leadership, one national coordination authority to manage that strategy across all sectors, and one country-level monitoring and evaluation system to measure and determine what was working. Over the past biennium efforts had been made to improve the collective effectiveness of the Joint Programme by establishing a unified budget and workplan and enhancing the effectiveness of joint action within countries.

68. The AIDS epidemic was one of the major issues of the times, no less than global climate change or the persistence of extreme poverty. It was an exceptional and unprecedented threat. Efforts must be hugely intensified to halt and reverse the epidemic. First and foremost, the great increase in political commitment by the world's leaders must be sustained, and AIDS must be kept at the very top of the agenda of the September summit. Second, the momentum on raising financial resources for AIDS response in low- and middle-income countries must be accelerated. Over $20 billion would be needed in 2008 to make real headway in putting in place a comprehensive, full-scale response. Third, an enormous improvement was required in the effectiveness of the global response to AIDS; in other words, the money must be made to work for people on the ground.

69. The starting point for maximizing effectiveness was real harmonization of effort. All actors must support nationally led strategies through the "Three Ones" principles, which had been widely endorsed by Governments, civil society and donors alike, and must be internalized within the systems of each organization. At the same time, all multilateral institutions and international donors must act on the recommendations made by the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination Among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors. One recommendation was that the Secretary-General should instruct Resident Coordinators to establish, in collaboration with Country Teams a joint United Nations team on AIDS, facilitated by the UNAIDS Country Coordinators. The Global Task Team also recommended that UNAIDS co-sponsors and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria should establish a clearer division of labour, based on their comparative advantages. The Programme had begun acting on those recommendations, which should greatly improve the coherence and effectiveness of the global response to AIDS.

70. **Mr. Shamanov** (Russian Federation) said that it was clear from the report that HIV/AIDS was still one of the most dangerous epidemics of the modern era. His Government was working actively to promote international action on all levels to make practical measures in the global strategy to fight AIDS more effective. A conference had recently been held in Moscow with UNAIDS and other United Nations agencies to discuss the socio-economic consequences of the epidemic in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

71. On the whole, the level of international cooperation and funding were to be commended, but resources were still inadequate to the size of the threat. Therefore, a comprehensive intersectoral approach to the issue was needed. UNAIDS played a central role in joint efforts to fight AIDS; the "Three Ones" principles should be integrated into the broader development agenda in all countries. UNAIDS also had the important task of developing a long-term approach at the global level, and sponsoring organizations should pay close attention to the recommendations of the Global Task Team. Finally, his delegation supported the recommendations on prevention contained in the UNAIDS Policy Position Paper and the Unified Budget and Workplan 2006-2010.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.

United Nations E/2005/SR.31

Economic and Social Council

Provisional

9 September 2005

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Substantive session of 2004
General segment

Provisional summary record of the 31st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 19 July 2005, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. Nesho (Vice-President) ..... (Albania)

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05-42976 (E)

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Regional cooperation

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan

In the absence of Mr. Akram (Pakistan), Mr. Nesho (Albania), Vice-President took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(a) Reports of coordination bodies (*continued*)

(b) Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 (*continued*)

(g) Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) (*continued*)

(i) Calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Snoussi** (Tunisia) welcomed the recommendations in the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/60/16), particularly those concerning the need to explore innovative approaches for funding the priorities of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (para. 236), and stressed the need for strengthening coordination so as to ensure optimum use of human and financial resources. His delegation strongly supported the recommendations concerning United Nations poverty eradication activities and the establishment of mechanisms for the exchange of information with regional commissions on the subject.

2. **Mr. Moulton** (South Africa) said his delegation was encouraged to hear that the Chief Executives Board (CEB) planned to develop a set of common approaches to guide the work of the United Nations system (E/2005/63, para. 1). He welcomed its efforts to ensure greater programme coordination among the entities of the United Nations system and the undertaking by the Committee for Programme and Coordination to give more attention to the programmatic aspects of the CEB report in the future.

3. Turning to the report of CPC (A/60/16), he said that he would focus on the conclusions and recommendations in paragraphs 201 to 212 and 227 to 237. While both the United Nations system and the African countries had much to be proud of in terms of their achievements, many major challenges needed to be addressed, the principal ones being lack of human, institutional and financial capacities, which continued to impede full implementation of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) at the scale and pace required. International commitments also did not always translate into development assistance.

4. With regard to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and ensuring African development through the implementation of NEPAD, several reports had reached a similar conclusion: namely that although African countries and the international community had made an encouraging start, Africa was far from realizing the requisite support levels to achieve the Goals. All agreed that a quantum leap forward was necessary. In that regard, United Nations system support would be vital in areas most crucial to Africa, for example in increasing budgetary support for the African Union's peace and security programme on a predictable multi-year basis and promoting long-term solutions to African countries' debt problems.

5. The United Nations system also had a key role in supporting NEPAD in several spheres, inter alia by playing a strong advocacy role to ensure that the special needs of Africa were addressed; ensuring that United Nations programmes and agencies supported NEPAD's activities; and helping to maintain peace and security and consolidate democracy in Africa.

6. South Africa therefore concurred with CPC that much more needed to be done to mobilize resources for programme implementation, to build technical expertise for the management of programmes and to ensure the Millennium Goals were attained within the framework of national development programmes and NEPAD programmes.

7. While welcoming the invaluable work of the Special Adviser on Africa (OSAA) and United Nations clusters in support of NEPAD and the various United Nations agencies, he said that those bodies needed to place greater emphasis on advocacy and resource mobilization and ensure an integrated response commensurate with the scale of challenges facing Africa.

8. **Mr. Boonpracong** (Thailand) said that Thailand had made HIV/AIDS one of its top priorities. It had achieved the Goals in advance of the target date and was on course to go even further and is reducing HIV prevalence among reproductive adults to 1 per cent by 2006. Thailand was ready to share its experiences and best practices in curbing this deadly disease; it

believed that a holistic approach to fight the HIV/AIDS pandemic must be adopted, so that prevention, treatment and care were all addressed concurrently. A strong political will and the commitment of all stakeholders were needed. In that respect, Thailand had an established National Plan of HIV/AIDS which involved, inter alia, a community-based approach and the promotion of a health-care system and social welfare. Fighting HIV/AIDS must be a joint effort both at the national and international levels. Thailand, together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), had recently organized a workshop on AIDS prevention in Nairobi, and a similar workshop was planned in Pretoria. Thailand was supporting the ongoing work of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), as well as the implementation of the "three ones" principle of country-level coordination.

9. **Ms. Haycock** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that scaling up a comprehensive response to fight HIV/AIDS to underpin the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was a critical issue for the European Union. Accordingly, she hoped that the Council could address the outcomes from the seventeenth meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) in its own deliberations. She was pleased to see that all the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors had been adopted. Finally, she noted the central importance of supporting the implementation of the "three ones" principles at the country level.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(a) Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development (*continued*) (A/59/823-E/2005/69 and E/2005/50)

10. **The President** invited the Council to take note of the summary by the President of the special high-level meeting of the Council with the Bretton Woods institutions, the World Trade Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (A/59/823-E/2005/69), and the note by the Secretary-General on coherence, coordination and cooperation in the context of the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus: achieving the internationally agreed developmental goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration (E/2005/50).

11. *It was so decided.*

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(a) Reports of coordination bodies (*continued*) (A/60/16)

12. **The President** invited the Council to take note of the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (A/60/16).

13. *It was so decided.*

(i) Calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields (*continued*) (E/2005/L.12)

14. **The President** drew attention to the note by the Secretariat (E/2005/L.12) and said that he took it that the Council wished to approve the calendar of conferences and meetings in the economic, social and related fields for 2006-2007 contained therein.

15. *It was so decided.*

(c) International cooperation in the field of informatics (E/2005/67)

(f) Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force (E/2005/71)

Economic and environmental questions

(b) Science and technology for development (E/2005/31)

16. **Mr. Laing** (Information and Communication Technologies Board), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on international cooperation in the field of informatics (E/2005/67), said that wireless access was being made available in all public areas and conference rooms at Headquarters, with supporting power. The ODS system was freely available on the internet, and the United Nations web page for the delegates had been updated.

17. **Mr. Khan** (Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force introducing the report of the ICT Task Force (E/2005/71), said that while ICT

were now seen as powerful enablers of development goals; insufficient attention had been paid in economic analysis and policymaking to the significance of ICT for economic growth (para. 6). As noted in paragraph 14, the potential of the ICT sector for development was far from being fully exploited. He then highlighted a number of the activities undertaken by the Task Force, such as the efforts of the working party on information and communication technology indicators and Millennium Development Goals mapping (paras. 24-26), the contribution to the work of the Millennium Project Task Force 10 on Science (para. 27), the organization of Global Forums on Internet Governance (paras. 29-31) and Enabling Environment (paras. 51-54) and the Global e-Schools and Communities Initiative (paras. 59-61). The ongoing programme of United Nations reform was also affording an opportunity for the Task Force to perform its mandate of providing assistance to the Secretary-General in developing a United Nations system ICT strategy.

18. After describing the many elements behind the Task Force's prominence and influence in the ICT-for-development field (see para. 72), he noted that, in order for ICT to positively foster development goals, they must be employed as part of a truly integrated and multi-stakeholder development approach (para. 81). In response to the Secretary-General's request for a more detailed proposal on a broad-based global alliance for ICT and development, the Task Force had therefore undertaken extensive consultations, resulting in broad recognition of the need for ongoing dialogue among all relevant stakeholders (paras. 76-77). Indeed, ICT for development was a cross-cutting issue that was relevant to all internationally agreed development goals and required the concerted actions of stakeholders from all sectors. Noting that there was currently no global platform bringing together stakeholders from all sectors, he said that the consultations and exchanges of views on the proposed alliance were continuing with a view to creating such a platform and presenting recommendations to the Secretary-General.

19. Finally, he said that the dual challenge was to foster connectivity for the world's population and use it to advance the Millennium Goals. Ultimate success in the drive to ensure access would have to be measured by the achievements in sustainable development. He hoped that an open, inclusive and multi-stakeholder global alliance for ICT and development would build upon the foundations that had been laid.

20. **Mrs. Taylor Roberts** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, welcomed the efforts undertaken jointly by the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics and the various Secretariat departments to improve the support services available to permanent missions and appealed to Member States to fully support the draft resolution contained in document E/2005/L.33, which requested the President to convene the Working Group for one more year.

21. While ICT had played an important role in enhancing development opportunities in recent years, many developing countries with limited access to ICT still faced a major challenge in terms of global market participation, basic service delivery and development opportunities. The Group of 77 and China therefore appreciated the ICT Task Force's efforts to promote multi-stakeholder dialogue on the role of ICT in development, encouraged its goal of promoting ICT mainstreaming in national policies and strategies, and was in favour of strengthening the Task Force.

22. **Ms. Brazier** (United Kingdom), speaking on behalf of the European Union, commended the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics for bringing practical and positive changes to the lives of representatives.

23. **Mr. Pirogov** (Russian Federation) said it was important that the needs of all countries were taken into account in the application of Information Communication Technologies (ICT) to development, including the economic, social and cultural spheres. His delegation agreed with the Commission on Science and Technology for Development on the importance of overcoming the digital divide between developed countries and developing countries and transition economies. That could be done, inter alia, by improving science and technical education, ensuring adequate funding, supporting venture capital, promoting the establishment of "business-incubators" and science-parks.

24. Regarding the discussions on establishing a global alliance for ICT and development, his delegation saw the alliance as a forum both for dialogue between all interested parties and for coordinating system-wide approaches to use the achievements of the ICT to implement the Millennium

Goals. Duplication of effort must be avoided and funding must continue to be voluntary.

25. His delegation also supported the work of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Informatics in providing adequate access of Member States to automated databases to the United Nations information systems and United Nations services. The Group must continue to effectively implement its function as a bridge between the growing needs of Member States in ICT and the work of the Secretariat.

26. The Secretariat had made welcome improvements in its ICT facilities for delegations, including wireless Internet access, password-free consultation of the Official Document System and more up-to-date hardware.

27. **Mr. Snoussi** (Tunisia), noted that, thus far, information and communication technologies had been a source of marginalization, rather than a factor for integration. However, it was now essential to integrate ICT as a strategic instrument for development, as they offered the possibility of partnerships, investment and employment, especially if adapted to the local context. Hence the need for a global digital partnership that reconciled development objectives with commercial interests. Moreover, as noted by both the ICT Task Force and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development in their respective reports, appropriate and widespread use of ICT was a prerequisite for attaining the Millennium Goals.

28. His Government was convinced that the World Summit on the Information Society would provide an international response to the digital problem. Holding the Summit in two phases — the first in a developed country and the second in a developing country — was in itself an important symbol, as it gave a message of solidarity and cooperation between two levels of development and two digital realities. Finally, he reiterated his Government's firm commitment to ensuring that the Tunis phase of that Summit was a success.

29. **Mr. Aliyev** (Azerbaijan) said that ICT access was especially important for people living in remote regions. Although the positive impact of ICT on attaining development goals was generally recognized, not enough attention had been paid to the significance of ICT for economic growth and the impact of investment in ICT for developing countries remained largely under-researched (E/2005/71 para. 6). In that connection he drew attention to the importance of financial mechanisms to support ICT for development, and expressed his delegation's appreciation for the work of the Task Force on Financial Mechanisms for ICT for Development, which it believed would make an important contribution to the Tunis phase of the World Summit on the Information Society.

30. Efforts were currently under way in Azerbaijan to create a strong economy. Parliament had reviewed a number of laws relating to the information society and the Government was working on a code on privacy and data protection and security of State computer systems. A national strategy on ICT for development had also been adopted. His delegation looked forward to the broad implementation of an e-government system for democratic governance and effective public administration and welcomed the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-backed National E-Government Network Initiative. His Government was continuing to step up financial support to ICT; in 2004, $20 million had been allocated to ICT in education and plans were under way to establish a super-computer centre at the National Academy of Sciences. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Virtual Silk Highway Project, meanwhile, was expected to provide higher education institutions with Internet access. While more allocations were expected for the creation of a national citizens' register and better application of ICT for electoral processes, there was a need for external support for the ICT sector and greater involvement by regional organizations and international financial institutions.

31. **Mr. Khan** (Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Task Force) recalled that the Council had initiated the groundbreaking approach of building a multi-stakeholder partnership in the ICT Task Force, which for the first time ever had included chief executive officers and business leaders. The Task Force had brought the United Nations development agenda to the heart of the Geneva phase of the World Summit on the Information Society, thereby ensuring that the Millennium Development Goals were a central part of the ICT-for-development agenda. Its focus now was how to mainstream the ICT-for-development agenda into the development agenda emerging from the Millennium Summit and the Millennium + 5 Summit in September 2005. If they could be combined, the two agendas would provide a powerful platform for building a real partnership between Governments,

multilateral institutions, the private sector and civil society as they moved towards implementation of the goals. The Council's responsibility was to ensure that the two phases of the World Summit and other United Nations conferences were not seen as two separate streams, but rather brought together to ensure a coherent and integrated follow-up. The multi-stakeholder dimension was essential at all levels. It was therefore very important for the Council to take account of the Secretary-General's proposal that multi-stakeholder input into the follow-up of United Nations conferences should be part of a transparent process that was linked to the Council's work and the broader development agenda.

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (E/60/90-E/2005/80, E/2005/47 and A/60/64)

Regional cooperation (E/2005/15, E/2005/15/Add.1, E/2004/15/Add.2, E/2005/16, E/2005/17, E/2005/18, E/2005/19, E/2005/20 and E/2005/21)

Economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/60/65-E/2005/13)

32. **Ms. Chew** (Department of Political Affairs), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on assistance to the Palestinian people (A/60/90-E/2005/80), said that it described measures taken by the United Nations system, in cooperation with Palestinian and donor counterparts, to assist the Palestinian people. On preparing the report, the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process (UNSCO) had made a concerted effort to integrate the analysis of Palestinian needs and United Nations responses according to thematic and sectoral requirements and to highlight the level of investment in each area. An emphasis had also been placed on institutional reform support and private sector development.

33. Although the situation on the ground during the reporting period had remained critical for the majority of Palestinians, the United Nations response had sought to intensify its medium-term development approach while continuing to meet emergency needs. United Nations agencies had assisted the Palestinian Authority in its efforts to refocus on longer-term planning and improved governance, investing some $10 million in technical assistance and capacity-building activities which were of direct benefit to it. The period under review had been marked by the announcement of Israel's disengagement plan from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank, successful Palestinian presidential elections and confidence-building efforts by both Israelis and Palestinians, and internal and external closures imposed by Israel had continued to obstruct economic recovery for Palestinians and complicate humanitarian access. Noting that an estimated 48 per cent of Palestinians were living under the poverty line at the end of 2004 and food consumption per capita had fallen by an estimated 25 to 30 per cent since 2000, she said that United Nations agencies, donors and humanitarian organizations would need to meet a wide variety of programming needs, while balancing short-term emergency requirements with a coherent development focus on the medium and long term. It was therefore vital that the international community continued to provide the necessary resources for assistance programmes for the Palestinian people.

34. Both parties had reaffirmed their commitment to the road map. While steps had been taken to implement the confidence-building measures agreed in Sharm el-Sheikh in February 2005, the recent upsurge in violence threatened to undermine that process. Noting that effective coordination by the parties remained vital to ensuring a successful implementation of the disengagement process, she said that the international community was continuing its efforts to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the parties and secure financial support for the revival of the Palestinian economy following disengagement. A successful disengagement should pave the way for full implementation of the road map which was aimed at achieving a two-State solution.

35. **Ms. Al-Bassam** (Chief, Regional Commissions New York Office) introduced the note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/60/65-E/2005/13).

36. Speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), she also introduced the report of the Secretary-General on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields (E/2005/15 and Add.1), the summaries of the economic surveys prepared by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), ECE, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (E/2005/16 to 20) and the note by the Secretary-General on the project for a Europe/Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar (E/2005/21).

37. **Mr. Gala López** (Cuba), speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Special Committee on Decolonization, welcomed the successful integration of many Non-Self-Governing Territories in the work of several United Nations bodies, since that had helped them to develop their administrative and human resource capacity and provided them with relevant information useful to their development process. The economic commissions and some specialized agencies had been particularly active in providing and coordinating assistance to many of those Territories. UNDP, in particular, was to be commended for its enlightened approach. A number of specialized agencies had also assisted the Territories by allowing them to participate directly, as members, associate members or observers, thereby ensuring an additional level of integration of the Territories in the international development process. In that regard, he applauded the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Tourism Organization, all of which had included provisions in their rules of procedure to allow for participation of the Territories, and he urged others to follow their example.

38. Highlighting the role of ECLAC and ESCAP, both of which provided for associate membership for small island non-self-governing territories he noted that whereas the General Assembly had provided for associate members of the regional commissions to participate in relevant special sessions of the General Assembly, the Council had not yet done so.

39. A positive example of support for a Non-Self-Governing Territory was the assistance provided by UNDP to Tokelau, which was entering the final stages of its transition to statehood in free association with New Zealand. In that regard, he urged all Member States, regional and international bodies to show their support for that emerging State by contributing generously to the International Trust Fund for Tokelau. Members were also urged to unanimously adopt the draft resolution on support for Non-Self-Governing Territories.

40. **Mr. Yuan** Yuan (China) said that his country actively promoted regional cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region as the best option in the age of globalization; indeed, regional cooperation was an effective tool in meeting the challenges of globalization. Provided they were consistent with WTO rules, the many new regional trading arrangements could give comparative advantages to members of the regional commissions and were an effective approach to promoting liberalization in global and regional trade. Indeed, they could supplement the multilateral trading system. China, which participated actively in many such arrangements, took its participation in the work of ESCAP seriously.

41. **Mr. Fedorchenko** (Russian Federation) said that the regional commissions played a unique role in the United Nations system in that they translated global development policy into a specific programme of action at the regional and country levels with the ultimate objective of achieving the Millennium Development Goals. They played a key coordinating role in their respective regions. His delegation supported the goal of fostering cooperation with the main departments, operational programmes and funds of the United Nations, and in particular UNDP, in providing technical assistance to Member States as well as in cooperation with regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations. The regional coordination meetings under the auspices of the Executive-Secretaries of the regional commissions constituted one of the most important forums for such cooperation and should be encouraged, since the interaction of the regional commissions with other regional partners ensured complementarity of the respective partners in the implementation of socio-economic development goals.

42. **Mr. Mekdad** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that, as indicated in the report contained in document A/60/65-E/2005/13, Israel continued, with utter disregard for international law and General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, to subject the Palestinian

population to barbaric and inhumane treatment. Unarmed civilians and children were routinely murdered, houses were demolished while centuries-old olive groves were destroyed. It was impossible to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in the Israeli-occupied territories where economic indicators remained negative. The report showed that the health of the population was deteriorating steadily due in part to the fact that Israel had buried radioactive waste in the occupied Syrian Golan and was using X-rays at checkpoints. The frequent closures or curfews coupled with the mowing down of children by Israeli snipers had effectively curtailed access to education.

43. The occupation authorities had also used a variety of impediments, including closures, to prevent the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The facilities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), including schools and clinics, had suffered damages. Settlement activities were expanding with the establishment of nine new illegal settlements in the Syrian Golan and work on the expansionist wall continued, a year after the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice declared it illegal. Israel still did not respect international law. The Rapporteur of the Human Rights Commission had noted that one of the basic objectives of the wall was to drive the Palestinians from their land by making their lives impossible. He wondered how long the international community was going to stand by silently as millions of oppressed Palestinians chafed under the yoke of oppression.

44. **Mr. Sermoneta** (Israel) expressed disappointment that the Council was being misused to discuss a political issue that detracted from its important work. It was even more disappointing that once the Council had decided to debate that inappropriate issue, it was doing so in a way that did not give a credible or accurate depiction of the situation.

45. The report set the parameters for the statistics it used to suit its convenience and changed them just as conveniently when the same parameters would discredit its own arguments. The scope of the report had been narrowly set with the clear intention of discrediting Israel. It took the Palestinian economic situation out of context, ignoring the campaign of terror and violence perpetrated against Israelis over the past four years. It also failed to reflect the significant impact on the health of the Palestinian economy of persistent corruption within the Palestinian Authority. A report of such limited scope could not deliver any constructive message; such blatant propaganda did not belong in the Council.

46. The Council should desist from considering reports framed in language that was biased in favour of one side of the conflict. Reports such as the current one, that respected the rights of only one side and patched together snippets of information without regard to context, exacerbated problems by allowing fabrications and distortions to persist far longer than they deserved. The current movement towards reforming the United Nations was intended to prevent politically motivated reports such as the current one. Neither the debate nor the report would do anything to improve the situation of the Palestinians.

47. **Mr. Siregar** (Indonesia) reiterated Indonesia's support for regional processes and the work of the regional commissions and noted that the Asia-Pacific region had had a mixed performance as far as achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was concerned. Indeed, some countries were projected to reach the targets before 2015 while others were struggling to meet some targets. Indonesia would be hosting a regional ministerial meeting in August in order to identify ways in which the international community could support the region's efforts beyond 2015. The main issues to be discussed included eliminating the existing disparities among and within the Asia-Pacific countries as a result of geographical, economic and social conditions. He urged all countries of the region to actively participate in the meeting at the ministerial level.

48. **Mr. Atiyanto** (Indonesia), referring to the report contained in document A/60/65-E/2005/13, said that it presented factual evidence of the ongoing plight of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan. It was evident that the Israeli occupation had deepened the economic and social hardship of the Palestinian people, confirming the need for greater attention from the international community. He expressed deep concern at, inter alia, the destruction of agricultural land for illegal settlements and the resource problems, including lack of water distribution and water pollution. He was particularly disturbed by the arbitrary detention of children in Israeli prisons without adequate medical care or access to legal counsel.

49. It was particularly alarming that Israel had completely ignored the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the separation wall, construction of which clearly violated the economic and social rights of the Palestinian people. It would therefore be extremely difficult for the Palestinian people to attain the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 unless the international community intervened. Violence was never a solution; the only sustainable option was for Israel to end its occupation of the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan.

50. Indonesia remained fully committed to the struggle of the Palestinian people to achieve their inalienable rights and their aspirations to live in a secure and independent prosperous homeland. That could be achieved through concerted international action based on the road map. The United Nations and its agencies should continue to play a significant role in alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian people. In that regard, the Council should continue its endeavours to assist the Palestinian people to live in dignity, free from want and fear.

51. **Mr. Al-Rasheed** (Saudi Arabia) said that the occupation was the problem. If the occupation were to cease, the situation of the Palestinian people would improve. That issue should remain on the Council's agenda as long as the occupation continued.

52. **Mr. Hijazi** (Observer for Palestine) said that Palestinian civilians, children in particular, continued to bear the brunt of the military assaults the occupying Power launched against cities, villages and refugee camps. The result was the catastrophic socio-economic situation of the Palestinian people, 38 per cent of whom were now completely dependent on food rations. Those figures were the fruit of Israel's brutal military occupation and systematic human rights violations against the Palestinian people.

53. Perhaps no policy was as far-reaching in its detrimental effects on Palestinians as the illegal policy of settlement construction in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. That policy was in flagrant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Despite countless United Nations resolutions calling on Israel to end its policy, Israeli settlement construction had increased throughout the past year. Equally dangerous was the construction of the "expansionist" wall in the occupied territory. Not only was Israel's unlawful construction of its wall resulting in de facto annexation of Palestinian land, but it would render a two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict physically impossible. It was important to highlight that, in its Advisory Opinion, the International Court of Justice had concluded that Israel was under an obligation to cease construction of the wall and to dismantle the sections constructed to date. Once again, Israel had turned a deaf ear to the international community's wishes and had continued building the wall deep into the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem and planned to complete construction of the wall around occupied East Jerusalem by September.

54. Over the past year, Israeli occupying forces had killed more than 869 Palestinians, bringing the total number of Palestinian civilians killed since September 2000 to more than 3,670. It was appalling to note that 41 of those wilfully killed were schoolchildren, some of whom had been killed while sitting at their desks. During the same period, the occupying Power had imprisoned nearly 8,000 Palestinians, including at least 259 Palestinian children, in the harshest conditions. In the past year alone, Israeli occupation forces had demolished at least 2,188 homes, rendering tens of thousands of Palestinians homeless.

55. If Israel continued its illegal practices, the Palestinian people would be prevented from meeting the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. The international community must take steps to halt the destruction by Israel of the natural resources of the Palestinian people and of those in the occupied Syrian Golan. The occupying Power must choose between walls and settlements or peace and prosperity.

56. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that it was regrettable that the Council was vowing to debate the issue yet again. Israel's occupation of Palestinian territory was aimed at changing the demographic make-up of the Territory. He wished to make three points.

57. Firstly, since the Council sought to promote sustainable development, poverty elimination and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, it must monitor all activities that could impede The attainment of the Goals. Foremost among such activities was the illegal occupation of Palestinian territory. By adopting a resolution the Council would demonstrate the importance it attached to development.

58. Secondly, regarding settlements, the Council had stressed that Israeli settlements on Palestinian land were illegal and that the Israeli settlement policy was expansionist. Forty-one per cent of the West Bank and 45 per cent of Gaza were under settlements. In the occupied Syrian Golan, most land there had been set aside for settlements or military activities; Syrians controlled only six per cent of the land.

59. His third point concerned the wall that Israel was building inside Palestinian territories. It was some three times higher than the Berlin Wall, and approximately five times longer. When it was completed, Israel would have taken over 51 per cent of all water resources in the West Bank. Activities related to the wall's construction were leading to the erosion of Palestinian soil and making it very difficult for Palestinian farmers to reach their farms in the first place.

60. **Mr. Al-Hebsi** (United Arab Emirates) endorsed the views expressed by previous speakers, adding that the item must remain on the Council's agenda for as long as the Israeli occupation continued.

The meeting rose at 5.43 p.m.